

characteristics of its citizens. Nevertheless, despite this risk of immediate refutation - and no doubt largely because I am still a new boy in Washington - I propose to plunge ahead and pass on to you for what they are worth some of the impressions I have received in the brief course of my sojourn in the United States. When next we meet, I trust that you will not be so unkind as to hold me too closely to any opinions which I may express today.

We Canadians tend to regard ourselves as experts on the life and habits of our American neighbours. More than that, other countries have come to think of us as such, so that we are expected to know instinctively the American "reaction" to situation and events at home and abroad. Further than that, there are some who seem to take it for granted that in most affairs we share with the United States a North American point of view. There is, of course, some truth in both contentions. For, in general, Canadians might reasonably be expected to know more about the United States and about Americans than the people of other countries. We do live next door. And there is a close resemblance on the surface at least, and a wide similarity in the conditions of our lives. We are both essentially North American with still about us some touch of the frontier. Each of us, in our own way and over great physical and political difficulties have consolidated our independence on the foundation of a free federal state running from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The celebrated American "way of life" is very largely the Canadian. The renowned border is undefended not only against military attack, but against ideas of every kind and by every medium. For our part in Canada this means that we are exposed to so much that is purely American in print, in picture, over the airwaves and by word of mouth, that some Canadians have, not infrequently, become alarmed at the danger of "Americanization".

I suppose that my own experience before taking my present job was pretty typical of many Canadians. I had spent a good many summer holidays on the New England coast, had visited New York frequently to see plays and art galleries and hear music, had read some American history, seen innumerable American movies, and had an acquaintance with a fair range of American newspapers and periodical literature. At an early age I had even lived for a couple of years in the United States. Again, like so many of us in this country, I had acquired several American "in-laws". And so, again like most Canadians, I fancy, I was not unwilling to pass judgment on pretty well any feature of life in the United States and, from the greater intimacy of my Canadian knowledge, I was usually prepared to tip off British or French friends as to what the Americans would or would not stand for.

Now, after only eighteen months in the United States, during which it has been my daily duty to study and observe these people, I am not at all sure that I was anything like as knowledgeable as I thought. Nor, I confess, have I the same confidence that, in all circumstances, we Canadians have any certain capacity to know and to interpret these